faces and flowing hair, fair until they had enticed young men into the treasure dens when they would suddenly turn into old women. There were also *ta-says* who haunted human beings, *son-ma* witches who disguised themselves until they were ready to eat you, and *belus*, ogres which thrived on human beings. Far from the careful nurturing which is given to modern children of the West in attempts to prevent fears of the dark and loneliness, in Thanatpin I could have pointed out the actual tree in which the old witch lived, and when it grew dark both my nurse and I would shiver together in each other's arms at the thought of it.

Nor were the funny stories of the right type for Western children, though they made us roar with delight. There were two brothers who wanted to make their grandmother beautiful, and bathed her in the hottest water they could produce; the water was boiling and the grandmother emerged clean and fair and rigid, and the two grandsons dressed her up and propped her in the doorway for all to admire. There was also the monkey who from his perch in a tree above the bazaar shouted: "Whoever eats of the fruit of this tree will have fragrant gases in his body." One poor human fool believed him, and ate, and went around hawking his ware of fragrant gases. He came to the court of the king, who caused seven layers of curtains to shroud the chamber for fear any of the fragrance would be lost when the experiment was carried out. We laughed to tears at the account of the poor fool's discomfiture.

When we were to be given any medicines or had any pain, however, both my father and mother waited on us. We did not use Western medicines in the house. We always had stocks of various kinds of *yet-sa*, a linctus powder with digestive qualities containing liquorice and herbs in a salt base. The taste is pleasant to all Burmese people who eat it at the slightest provocation; excess of it causes no harm. There is a popular brand on the market called *lay-myo shit-sè*, 80 kinds of wind, but in addition to this, each family gets a specially prepared type from their family monk. My father, who was interested in herbal medicine, collected recipes and my mother compounded them at home. We ate yet-sa whenever we had a slight stomach ache or when my mother considered that the food had been too rich. For a general tonic my father got from the monk a honey mixture with special powers, partly owing to the holiness of the monk, and we ate a tiny spoonful of this each night after prayers. For coughs and sore throats we had pills, called *hpongyi-bo-sha-na*, from Moulmein. They were made of pepper, capsicum, liquorice and salt, and acted by stimulating the salivary and throat juices. All these medicines had a pleasant taste and we liked eating them, but when we had a fever we were given *ngan-say*, a black powder of herbs and salt, which was mixed with hot water and

old man with rhetorical leanings and included things because they formed a nice rhyme, and, indeed, she was not far from the truth. Our monosyllabic language is a heavenly gift to us with its endless scope for the most unrestrained punning and rhyming; the pun in Burmese is not execrable humour but a stepping stone for flights of fancy. What my sister was not allowed to eat were the three most precious foods as proverbalised in: *a-thi-hma tha-yet; a-gwet hma la-hpet; a-tha hma wet:* among fruits the *tha-yet*, among leaves the *la-hpet*, among flesh the *wet: tha-yet, la-hpet* and *wet* being the mango, the pickled tea-leaf and the pig's flesh respectively, and open to question as being really the prize specimens of their class, but certainly rhyming happily.

My parents were so good to us; they never scolded, beat or punished us that I can remember. Perhaps they had both had so much discipline in their own youths; I can remember the day we were told to answer them "Father" and "Mother" when they called us, instead of *Paya* as we had done formerly. Paya is the term of extreme respect and humility, sometimes adopted by children to parents, always by servants to their superiors, by subordinates to senior officials, and by all to royalty and the clergy. It is also the suffix to honorific titles. Its true and ancient use had associations of reverence only, but it has taken on a more subservient hue with the advent of government and foreign officials.

But whether we answered Paya or Father, my mother's guiding influence led us to look on my father with awe, even though he was the parent who clowned with us at home. We were always bathed and dressed before he came home, waiting for him. As soon as he entered the gate we raced down the drive to carry his umbrella, took him upstairs and scrambled to take his shoes off as soon as we could get him seated. His shoes, suspenders and socks were removed by combined efforts, my father pretending great helplessness all the while. We went for walks while my parents went to play tennis, but retuned in time to carry their racquets upstairs and remove my father's shoes again. After dinner my mother and we lay on mats while my father sat in an easy chair and pretended to get his nursery rhymes all wrong, until we taught him:

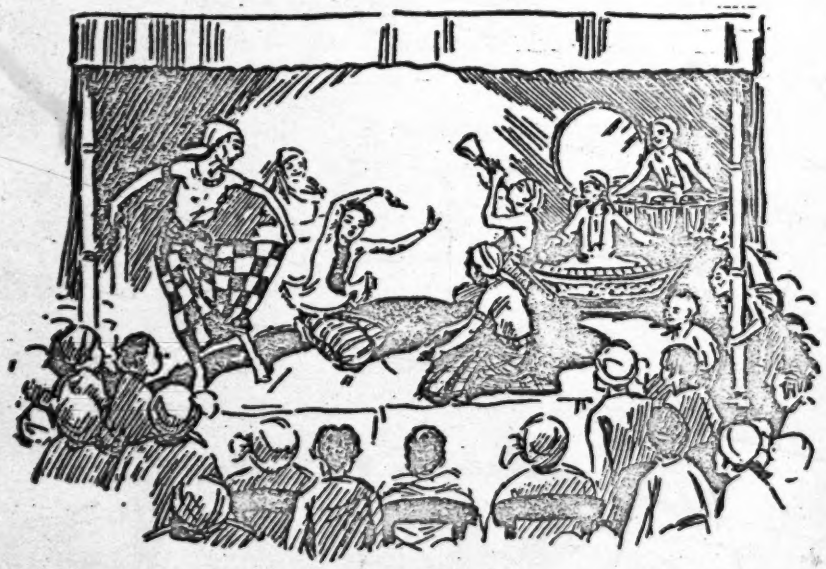
A-hpo gyi oh, hka kon kon,	Old man so bent and grey,
Ma thay ba hnin ohn	Do not die as yet we pray.
Naung hnit-kha ta-saung-mon	Till next December try to tarry
Pwè kyi ba ohn.	And watch the actors play and marry.

Or the voracious cat who ate everything:

Kyaung-gyi yè tè mi tan to	Oh you big and short tailed cat.
A-hai ko sa ba lo	Swallowing the lean
A-tha ko myo.	And eating the fat.

545 according to the universal rule in Burmese entertainment that the best bit is worth waiting for and must be reserved to the last.

All this while, the dancing girl—the minthami—is a most delightful creature, fascinating by the combination of wanton behaviour with the stiff and formal dress which makes a flat and angular doll of her, being open to the most lewd jokes by the clowns while she protests a chaste morality in reply to their quips. She hits the clowns with her fan, claps her hands and stamps her feet, plays with her scarf and rearranges her dress with great care, disregarding the audience altogether, asks for a cigarette or a drink of water when she wants it, gets a Burmese powder puff passed to her after an energetic dance and the clowns to fan her with mock earnestness and many jokes about her sweating, lets her eye rove among the audience until it has lighted on the football or



rowing hero of the hour, and gets teased with him throughout the evening. These dancing girls considered it a feather in their cap to be known as a favourite of the University students, and many of them adopted titles conferred on them for successful performances at the colleges. Academic titles were invested with glamour through being in Pali or in English—*Weiksa Mè, Uni-barsity Mya Than Kyi, Tegatho Thein Tin, Colleik Sein*: Graduate Damsel, University Mya Than Kyi, Taxila Thein Tin and College Sein, a zat dancer of more status.

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The jokes of the clowns were mostly based on pornographic punning, in their sallies with the dancer, in descriptions of current events such as

elections, pagoda festivals, the football match which has just been won, or an Indian film which is being advertised, and on mispronunciations of English words to give them a bawdy meaning. In fact, they were amusing in the way of good music hall gags, but in an anyein the clowns needed more native wit and quickness, for not only did they extemporize by quips at the audience, exercising their fancy at a dog that howled or a foreigner sitting in the back rows, but the audience itself was free to join in and challenge their sharpness.

The songs sung, however, were not vulgar songs; they were pretty or serious and were mostly written specially in honour of the occasion. No matter what the reason for the staging of the anyein, the song-writers did not find accurate description an impediment to their poetic fancy, fitting details of the time, place and sponsors to rhyme and rhythm. When an Anglo-Burman student and I won State scholarships in 1937, Inya Hall, the residential hall for women, held an anyein, and the song of the evening had a refrain which repeated: *"Mi Mi yè, Kathleen yè, Ah-kya bwè:* Oh Mi Mi, Oh Kathleen, how much to be admired and emulated!" Unfortunately, by the time I returned home the tune had been fitted to more popular words and I never learnt the original version, but I do remember the song written as an accompaniment for the dance of Ma Ohn, a talented student from Mandalay, who took part as representative performer of the University in an entertainment given for the funds of the National Girls' School. The words show the characteristic happy mixture of song and description:

Yatanadon Man Shwe Myo thu,
Thabaw kaung hnin say-da-na hpyu
Varsity nan myi yu
Kyaung-gyi colleik thu.
A-hok ko bin thabaw tu,
Ta-gè ko bin manaw hpyu
Myoma kyaung a-hlu
Waing wun ka-pa-ku.
Yandon ngway ko say-da-na hta ya
Way-bya myat kyi hpyu
Amyo thami Boddha ba-tha
Taing ee ee sa hpyu
Aung lan ta lu lu
Nameik kaung thabaw hmat yu,
Myoma kyaung a twet—hsaung ywet lo ku
hsaung ywet lo ka
Pyo pyo Ohn ko Shwe Daing Nyun ga thachin you pay lè thu.

539 Dweller of Mandalay, City of Jewels,
With a generous heart
To come and take part
As student of our greatest schools.
Indeed so willing
So glad to be filling
Our need for the cause of the National School.
With mind so kind towards the fund
For Buddhist girls, our country's dower,
As this succeeds our plans shall flower.
She comes to dance for the National School,
She comes to dance,
She comes to dance,
Young lady Ohn, sweet, single, pretty,
For whom Shwe Daing Nyun has written this ditty.

873 We laughed loud and long at the jokes of our most popular pair of
522 clowns—a thin shrivelled man called Hnyat-Gyi ("great nut-cracker")

and a big well-fed man called Dambouk ("pillau rice")—on the occasions when we could hear them, but during the intervals our daily companions at the University did not allow us to miss them very much. The average Burman spends much time and thought, comparatively speaking, on making puns and spoonerisms, fashioning riddles and conceits to spice or flower his normal speech, and both the native wit and the monosyllabic language ensure a roaring success. It was the commonest thing to pass a crowd of students sitting or standing around having a

verbal contest, and to hear at intervals a cheering and clapping as they shouted "Point! Point!" which English word they had adopted for applauding a telling thrust. This interest in wit enabled our lecturers to enliven their discourses with spontaneous humour rather than to draw upon a perennial stock of jokes. There were both serious and frivolous uses of this privilege. We had two serious old Burmese lecturers —Saya Lin and Saya Pwa—who belonged to my grandfather's world, coming to lecture every day in the purest Burmese but never noticing the existence of the modern college, its young inhabitants or other branches of learning. They were regarded with so much veneration that no student ever answered the now universally adopted English "Present" to their roll-call but replied: "*Shi ba tè, Saya:* I am here, please, Master."

At one time Saya Lin's junior Bachelor classes contained a girl student who was admired by a young man called Maung Chan Tha (which name means "Prosperity"). Maung Chan Tha had passed his junior Bachelor year and was in a senior class, but he attended the junior class daily in order to have a back view of his loved one whom he did not dare to address. This dumb worship occasioned a daily distraction among the embarrassed girl and her companions and a lot of ribald comments from the back benches. Saya Lin continued oblivious of all this until one day the term, "*paw-rana saga:* descriptive old usage", occurred in his text. "Now, shall I explain to you what *paw-rana saga* is?" said Saya Lin. "It is the other name for an object or an animal, which must describe its qualities. We have the pig, which in paw-rana may be termed *to-pwa*: prolific increase; and then we have the ox. The ox", said the old man with a fierce denouncing arm pointed at the offending swain, "may be termed Prosperity—*Chan Tha*!" At which a hundred lusty throats yelled "Point! Point!" and the discomfited Maung Chan Tha fled, never to attend a junior class again.

When the strikers of 1936 attacked the moral influence of a young member of the staff, one of the 18 serious charges they formally laid to his account was his habit of punning with the names of young lady students in too playful a manner. Among his students were two pretty sisters whose names, A-si and A-yi, could mean respectively, "in a row" and "smiling", a Christian girl called Margaret who was serious enough but whose name pronounced in Burmese scanned and rhymed with a word denoting excessive frivolity, and a noisy Chinese girl called Ma Ngan Chu. Said the poetic lecturer in illustrating various points:

Myet-lon galay ga ta-kyi-kyi	Little eyes, clear, beguiling,
Thwa galay ga a-si a-yi.	Little teeth, *seried, smiling.*
Kalet tet-let	Coquette, coquette,
Mar-ga-ret.	*Margaret.*

873 Or, in less complimentary vain :

522 *Hsu Hsu pu pu* — Boisterous shrew
Ma Ngan Chu. — *Ma Ngan Chu.*

522 538 But only in a novel can justice be done to the sustained humour, precision and allusiveness of colloquial speech. Proverbs may be a pointer, however, and the following, a few of the hundreds familiarly used by the normal Burman, are typical of the condensation of thought, the concrete nature of the allusions, and the witty rhyming usually present.

Kala ma-naing, *Ya-kaing mè.*	Can't get the better of the Indian, So the Arakanese is black.	Venting your wrath on a scapegoat.
Paya lè pu yin *Leiku lè tu yin.*	While worshipping at pagoda, Digging for turtle's eggs too.	Kill two birds with one stone.
Khat taing ngan-de *Pago hsa.*	O Pegu salt That flavours every ladleful.	The ubiquitous person.
Hsin pa-sat *Hnan-pet.*	Pelting the elephant's mouth With sesame seeds.	Five loaves and two fishes.
Kala taik *Kya win kaik.*	Into Indian building Tiger enters and bites.	Bedlam.
Mi-gyaung min *Yay gin pya.*	Showing the crocodile King The water tracks.	Teach Grandmother to suck eggs.
Thay yin myay gyi *Nay yin shway hti.*	Die, the earth ; Stay, the gold umbrella.	Do or die. Be corpse or King.
Taung hma a-kut *Meinma hma a-wut.*	As border to basket So dress to a woman.	
Shin bayin tahka htwet *Pe-gyi ta-lay kyet.*	One appearance of a King, One boatload of broad-beans can be cooked.	Person who is always late in appearing dressed.

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545 Zawtagômma melodrama, which the old sayā at Pegu has just brought out, and which is having a tremendous run all through the low country. The song is about the Saddan mere, the lake of the Lord White Elephant, where golden lotuses flower perpetually, where the gorgeous yin-dwin bird sails on the silvery waters, great butterflies flap about with painted wings and sip the nectar of the fabled jasmine, and peacocks stalk proudly on the jewelled margin, while around
● 522 roam elephants white, red, and black in happy security. The singer has hardly finished when the lu-byet, the village jester, breaks in with a travesty of the whole thing, mocking at the tremolos and the lofty style, and taking off the peculiarities of the singer. He went out to a lake too, and launched a canoe on it, but he was capsized by a huge creature that came up from below; and then he found that he had got into a slimy buffalo wallow, out of which he only escaped after great peril from the horns of its three outraged owners, who butted him under the surface many times; and at last, when he crawled out, he was so brown and dirty that some passers-by took him for a hermit, and gave him some rotten
522 plantains in alms. Before the "prince" has time to show
593 any bad temper, a girl commences a coquettish ditty, somewhat after the fashion of the English "Paddle my own canoe," about a poor wife whose husband comes home and storms and growls and abuses because there is no rice ready cooked, softens down when he has crammed himself with curry and rice, but breaks out into grumbling again at night because his wife cries and will not go to sleep. Such tyranny the young lady declares she will never expose herself to, or
533 at any rate "she'll be no submissive wife." Then there are a
832 few love-songs, wherein the girls are compared with the maids of the palace in Mandalay, and the Mandalay girls generally (who are *ex officio* pretty) with the daughters of nats, with Madi, the model wife of Wethandaya (the prince who in his next existence became the Lord Buddha), with flowers and stars and gems, and whatever similes lovers all the world over are in the habit of making. The swaying of the body as they walk, the turning in of the elbows, the fragrant powder on their cheeks and necks, and a few other items which would not commend themselves to a Western admirer,

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tribute must be as gratifying as the loudest stamping of feet and whistling on fingers of a London theatre. In fact a Burman might perhaps be justified in doubting the enthusiasm and admiration which finds vent in whistling. 536

The acting as a whole cannot be said to be satisfactory. The circumstances are against it. Who could "lose himself in his part" in the centre of a crowd of people all smoking and often talking? Moreover the subjects treated are so romantic and remote from ordinary worldly events that no one can be expected to realise them. Finally, who could keep it up for ten hours at a stretch? Nevertheless, individual passages are occasionally wonderfully well done. The piteous wailings and desolation of the princess; the majesty of the king; the grim savagery of the demon, are often very effectively delineated, while the clowns are almost invariably exceedingly clever. They are chosen for their ready wit, many of the jokes being extempore, as well as for their power of facial contortion. Caricatures of the performances of the other actors and comic songs form their chief stock-in-trade, and the text of the play is very far from being adhered to. It is an undoubted fact, if scarcely complimentary, that the clown has much more to do in the play and is very much broader in his jokes when Englishmen are present than when there is a purely national audience. The prolongation of the comic parts is due to a courteous desire to please the visitors, buffooneries being much more readily understood than high dramatic art, while the coarseness is unfortunately due to the same impression which makes a Burman always produce brandy and beer for the refreshment of a white man, the idea namely that that is what he likes best. None of the higher class troupes, more especially those from Upper Burma, will, however, condescend to this sort of thing. 522 ● 522 186

The company formerly was always made up in Mandalay, or said it was. There are other troupes, but it is usually taken for granted that they cannot be better than second-rate. The delta Burman is firmly persuaded that "far birds have fair feathers." In their humble phraseology they say, "In the Low Country we are not up in the humanities." This is not exactly complimentary to longer 536 184 177

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ing two birds with one stone." Maung Tha Byaw said he was going to worship at the Shwe Dagôn pagoda. He gave a performance or two, and made several (Burmese) fortunes. Hence the saying—

Payā lè pu yin
Leip u lè tu yin.

You go and worship and dig turtles' eggs.

Turtles' eggs for prayer
Reward the pious player.

Maung Tha Byaw was not only a good singer, but himself wrote very good songs, and was particularly clever at coining in phrases the wisdom of many with the wit of one. No other "prince" has ever attained to his fame. Best known among the clowns was Shwe Lôt Gyi, who had the knack of making local jokes wherever he happened to be, and took the fullest advantage of the scope which the language afforded him in the way of punning. Just after the railway from Rangoon to Prome was opened, Shwe Lôt Gyi was performing in a piece where the prince and his servant, the clown, wander away into the forest and fall into a state of great destitution. The prince bewails his sad fate in a dolorous tedat (a tune appropriate to such lamentations), and finishes by asking what they are to do. The lubyet replied, "The English have just opened a railway here. You go and trespass on it, and I'll lay information against you and get the reward." The idea showed considerable acuteness in a man who had never seen a railway before.

Among the "princesses" many youths have been noted for the sweetness of their voice. The two best were Maung Tha Zan and, running him very close, Maung Mu, both of them, like Tha Byaw and the clown, Mandalay men. The accuracy with which they imitated the female voice was wonderful, the more so as every song abounds with trills and turns which would expose the least roughness. Neither in the recitative, the tremulous erotics, nor the doleful wailings of the maiden for her absent lover, would the stranger ever suspect the performer's sex.

The plays are performed during the day only in a few and exceptional cases, such as the arrival of a great man,

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—no doubt owing to the diversion of mind produced by banging away on the top of your roof, and the confidence and hope which the operation induces. Moreover, so much damage is done to the house itself that repairs take some time, which also serves to keep the mind occupied.

When the thayè tôpthi is over, the people return to their houses, where the pots with their consecrated contents are. The yellow string is unwound from the sticks and divided into lengths. Some people hang it all round the eaves of the house in little bags, others tie pieces of it round the left wrist, more especially those who go about much. At a time when there is cholera about, most of the young men may be seen with these wristlets. A Rangoon clerk detected wearing one colours with annoyance, and says his parents made him put it on. He very probably throws it away, but the same night he will have a fresh piece on. The thread is coloured with dye obtained from the wood of the jack-tree, the same which supplies the colouring matter for the monkish garments. The thabye bin leaves are kept in the pot, or scattered about the house. The tree is particularly highly esteemed by the Burmese. A species of it, the thabu thabye bin (the Malay apple, *Eugenia malaccensis*), is celebrated as the largest tree in the island which lies to the south of Mount Myinmo. Sprigs and leaves of the thabye bin are cut, prayers and supplications for absent friends and relatives offered up before them, and then the twig is thrown into a pot of water. A song has been composed about the tree itself, and is one of the most popular of those that do not belong to the category of love-songs. The jester in a play has always an unfailing draw when, wishing to testify his regard for some one, he declares he has cut down an entire thabye bin and thrown it into the river that his friend may enjoy good health. The joke lies in the contrast between this and the couple of leaves in a small pot used by people ordinarily.

It might have been expected that contact with English civilisation and doctors would have put an end to the riotous absurdity of the thayè tôpthi; but it has not by any means. In fact the house-beating goes on more vigorously in Rangoon and the larger district towns than elsewhere. This is

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objects used in the ceremony. The largest table is covered with a lace cloth and on it stands an alabaster statue of the Buddha in a carved and decorated case. Before the figure of the Buddha are offerings of flowers, water, a candle bananas and cocconuts, placed in a special bowl. There is also a dish of puffed rice, a carved gilt bowl, and three new bowls, the latter for the initiates. Each of the bowls contains some of the traditional articles required for a monk: beads, water cups, needle and thread, a straight razor. The carved, gilt begging bowl symbolizes the type used by the Buddha when he was on earth. The second table contains offerings of bananas and coconuts for the monks, and richly decorated gilt trays symbolic of the kind used in the days of the Burmese kings but now only for purposes of decoration. These will be carried by young girls in the procession. The third table contains robes and other gifts for the several monks who are invited to the ceremony. On the fourth table are mats and pillows for the initiates to use. They will be presented to the monks as gifts afterwards.

The elaborate preparations for the ceremony begin on the morning of the preceding day. Young girls go from house to house to borrow betelnut boxes, mats and carpets. In the afternoon a five piece orchestra, hired for the occasion, arrives at the place of the ceremony. It consists of two large drums, a small drum, a wind instrument, a xylophone, and cymbals. Now an elder makes
534 offerings to the spirits (nats). Bananas, a coconut and a lighted candle are placed on a tray. The elder holds the tray and recites invocations to the good and the evil spirits. The evil spirits are implored not to harass any person who participates in the ceremony, because it is a work of merit; the good spirits are reminded of the meritorious nature of the ceremony and asked to watch over and protect the proceedings. As the spirits are so addressed he swings the tray towards each member of the orchestra in turn, sometimes three, sometimes nine, and sometimes twelve times. The orchestra continues to play intermittently throughout the afternoon, evening, and into the night. Early in the evening the young men of the village come to the monastery with their own musical instruments -- mandolins, guitars, and violins -- and sing and dance into the early morning hours. The orchestra group remains at the monastery all night.

About midnight, a group of men who are responsible for cooking the food
252 set to work at this task. Women do not normally cook meals for an occasion as large as this; it is felt that the quantities of food required and the amount of labor involved is too much for them to manage. Around three hundred people are expected at a large shinbyu in the village. The cooks, about a dozen middle-
● [522] aged men, sit around the fire they have lighted in a clearing a short distance from the monastery, drink tea, smoke, and make jokes. One man is introduced to the group as the 'all-Burma curry-cooking expert'; another is called 'No. 1 soup cook'; a third is dubbed 'best rice cook of the village.' During the night they prepare large quantities of boiled rice, pork curry, sour bean sprouts, fried fish paste, and a vegetable soup.

[292] Early on the morning of the day for the ceremony, the initiates are dressed by friends of their families. After a bath, thanakha, an astringent-like paste made from ground tree bark and water, is applied to their faces. Then they don silk longyis and thin, white muslin jackets, beneath which they wear cotton vests. The longyi is very ornate, made of heavy silk, and is seamless. Gold chains and necklace, bracelets and rings are put on. The head dress is a fine silk cloth, wound round the head, and decorated with garlands of flowers.

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scenes. Still later, the scenes came to be taken from one story only, so that a whole story was given by the pageant. Dresses became quite gorgeous and the scheme elaborate. The pageant now needed organization. Therefore, the village came to be divided into two parts, eastern and western quarters or northern and southern quarters (the village was usually greater in length than breadth, being built along a main road). In larger villages and towns, the division was into four quarters. Each quarter was responsible for the production of a pageant. There was intense rivalry between the quarters to produce the finest pageant; it was usually friendly, but often enmity arose, and many pageants were occasions for free fights. The rivalry further developed the pageant, for new ideas would be introduced by one quarter to outrival the others. Soon the pageant became a play, its scenes coming to life.

The *Nibhatkhin* was the Burmese equivalent of the English miracle and mystery plays. It was the pageant come to life. With the pageant, the religious processions went along the main streets without stopping, each cart representing a set scene. But with the *Nibhatkhin*, each cart stopped at certain places. The most common of such places were the market-place, the house of the chief administrative officer, and the pagoda where the procession ended. At each of those places, each cart stopped, and the scene came to life. Dialogue and action were used. Therefore, people at the stopping places saw what was in effect a play.

The *Nibhatkhin* was extremely popular, and it lived on until recently, just as many of the English miracle plays continued to be produced right through the Elizabethan period. I saw one in the out-of-the-way town of Pauk as recently as 1916. However, I do not think that *Nibhatkhins* are produced anywhere nowadays. Sometimes one sees a procession on cars and motor lorries as a sort of reminiscence of the *Nibhatkhin*. But such processions are mere shows and lack the essential features of the Burmese miracle plays.

It was for the entertainment of the populace that the *Nibhatkhin* came into being, and as the Burmese entertainment connotes laughter, soon the element of humour came into the *Nibhatkhin*. At first none of the characters was made humorous, for they all came out of religious stories. And so the clown was introduced. The clown or *Lu-byet* ('the non-serious man') was put into the *Nibhatkhin* as an extra character, an attendant on the prince-hero. He was extremely popular, and soon another clown, an attendant on the princess-heroine,

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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536 522 was introduced. The clowns were usually males, though later a female clown-attendant of the princess occasionally appeared. The clown was so popular that he continued to appear as an extra character even when the plays of the great dramatists came to be produced later. He was essentially outside the play. He made up his own part, he invented his own dialogue, and made up his jokes as the play moved along. However, even with the *Nibhatkhin*, he was not allowed to interfere with the movement of the play and its story. He played and joked at the beginning of the first scene when the actual story had not begun, he gave sometimes an outline of the story and its sources, and he gave information regarding the production of the procession and the play. He was the most privileged person among the actors, for he alone could without offence laugh at, and satirize, all things and all persons.

[516]

536 796 522 178 However, the clown was essentially unconnected with the actual story, and soon the actual characters came to be burlesqued. As the devil in the English miracle plays, the villain of the *Nibhatkhin* (in the Birth Stories, the villain was a previous incarnation of Devadat who repeatedly tried to harm the Buddha) became a humorous and popular character. The Burmese love of humour and gentle satire would have turned the whole *Nibhatkhin* into pure farce had not a convention arisen with regard to the presentation of religious characters. The Buddha was never to be represented on the stage. Stories about him up to the time he actually attained Buddhahood could be presented, but no one should impersonate him when he had become the Buddha. It was soon followed by another convention that the character of an *arahat* (saint) should not be presented unless it was absolutely necessary, and then only when the part was to be taken by an able and 'serious' actor, who must be actually keeping a fast on the day and night the *Nibhatkhin* was being presented. As a person keeping a fast has to behave in a dignified manner, that convention prevented the part from being turned into a humorous one.

With all these developments, people did not forget that the *Nibhatkhin* was essentially a religious show presented in connexion with religious festivals, and therefore further development was impossible. The conservatism of the village, the dislike of the amateur actors to be in any way profane or thought to be so, the restricted scope of the stories and the characters, all prevented any further development of the religious drama as such.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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536* 178 791 554 profession of mediums, they could break away also from the tradition and conservatism of the spirit worshippers. They were outside the religion and outside the spirit worship. They were fettered by nothing. They were the only persons who could develop new ideas with regard to the *Nibhatkhin*. And they were the first to realize the possibilities of the new entertainment. Soon they had developed it into the Burmese equivalent of the English interlude.

536* 178 522 The professional dancers became actors. People were no longer satisfied with mere dancing and singing, for the *Nibhatkhin* had given them some taste of the dramatic scene. Therefore the dancers in the middle of their entertainment paused and gave a little scene, or rather a one-act play. The male dancer became the hero, the female dancer the heroine, and the other two or three dancers became minor characters. The clown had been long before borrowed from the *Nibhatkhin*, and he became a mimic-dancer attending on the others. For two reasons the scene was always the forest. First, it did not need much stage scenery, as the branch of a tree would be enough to indicate that the action was supposed to be taking place in a forest. Second, the journey through a forest by the hero and heroine made it possible for human beings and fairies, demons and gods, princes and commoners to meet and take part in various adventures and misadventures. Thus the Burmese interlude came into being.

536* 744 Perhaps it is not illogical to wonder whether there was an intermediary stage of development, whether there were plays comparable to the English morality plays, bridging the gap between the *Nibhatkhin* on the one hand and the Burmese interlude on the other. It is of course impossible to be certain with regard to the question, for no Burmese miracle play or interlude has come down to us in writing. I have said[1] that there are oral accounts regarding the *Nibhatkhin* and that entertainment which I have termed the interlude, and also written accounts regarding the latter. But there is absolutely no mention in those accounts of anything which could be termed the Burmese morality play. Yet, I venture to think that there must have been plays comparable to the English moralities. If it should be presumed that the interlude developed directly out of the *Nibhatkhin*, there would be a big gap between the two. I think that the professional actors first gave semi-religious plays in imitation of the *Nibhatkhin*. I think also that there were also plays actually dealing with abstract notions of morality and religion which formed the

[1] Introduction, pp. 7–10.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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popularity of the heroic *Rama* and the coming of national victories undermined their influence, until U Awbatha came with his *Jatakas*. U Kyin U improves the art of portraying character. His interest in, and his mastery of, the portrayal of dramatic character we have already considered in the sections dealing individually with his plays; but I wish to consider here the question of the absence of developed female characters in his plays. His plays have many women in them, but except for Parpahein's mother, they are undeveloped. The princesses in *Daywagonban* are just pretty dolls. In *Mahaw*, when Mahaw's men go round the city threatening to pull down houses on the plea that improvements have to be made to make the city fit for the coming of their king, a lady-in-waiting of the queen-mother comes out and scolds their leader; she is very realistic and full of life and fiery temper, but we have only that glimpse of her. In *Daywagonban*, the ogre-princess, she who steals the little prince, begins well, but just as we are becoming interested in her, she changes into a mere doll. Even Parpahein's mother is unsatisfactory in the fact that we see too little of her. When we remember that there are such living male characters as Mahaw, Kaywut, Parpahein, Athumbain, it is surprising that there is not one female character comparable to them. I can offer no explanation. Myawaddi had already portrayed quite interesting female characters, and one would have expected U Kyin U to take some hint from him. And there was no difficulty in getting suitable actresses to take the parts, for from the very beginning women took equal rank and importance with men in Burmese dramatic productions; there was no need to dress up boys as women to take female parts as was done on the Elizabethan stage.

Comic characters are also absent from U Kyin U's work. The comic spirit was strong in the *Nibhatkhin* and also in most, if not all, interludes. The villain as chief comic character was the hall-mark of the interlude, and even in the court plays comic figures were many; the demon-king in *Rama* was a very popular comic character, and there is a gentle satirical vein in Myawaddi. That comic element U Kyin U rejects not completely, but almost. The dialogue between the leader of Mahaw's men and the lady-in-waiting is humorous, and there is some element of humour in the sneers and jeers of the ministers of the court of the two princesses, at Daywagonban's embassy asking for the elder princess. The ogre-princess, in her first few words, reminds one of the comic villainess of the interlude and of the demon-king's sister in the popular adaptations of the *Rama*

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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536* play. In *Parpahein* the speech of a minister in which he tries to hide
522 his fear for his own safety under a cloak of religious-mindedness has some element of satiric humour. But these are all the instances of the comic spirit in his plays. I can offer no explanation of this almost complete absence of the comic element. Perhaps U Kyin U thought that the introduction of comic scenes would spoil the artistry and unity of his plays; perhaps he found the drama in danger of being swamped by the comic element if there were to be no checks against it. I do not know.

536* The actors and the audience were fond of heroics and scenes of 'blood and thunder', with the result that the interlude was becoming heroic. *Rama* was heroic, and the fiery speeches of Rama and the demon-king were extremely popular and were imitated in the interludes. The feat of strength where the bow was bent by Rama, the fight between the monkey-princes, the battle between Rama's forces and those of the demon-king, the killing of the latter by the god-given bow—held the audience breathless. The influence of Myawaddi counteracted, though rather feebly, the element of heroics, but the national victories increased the appetite of the people for scenes of mighty deeds and glorious victories. The return to the *Jataka* checked the heroic element, but we find traces of it in U Kyin U. Mahaw, Kaywut, Daywagonban, and Parpahein indulge in bombastic and fiery speeches. The execution of Athumbain and the raid on the palace by Parpahein's rebel army savour of the heroic interlude. The wounding of Daywagonban's brother by the god-given bow, the fight between the *naga*-dragon and the *galôn*-bird, the scenes where the two princesses and the hermit are shown bound and dangling from the gallows ready to be executed later, the thunder and lightning sent by the king of the gods to warn Daywagonban—all these are echoes from the blood-and-thunder interlude. In fact one might call *Daywagonban* a series of heroic interludes.[1] However, U Kyin U is very much

[1] *Daywagonban* also shows some traces of the influence of *Rama* on the interlude, apart from the heroic element. The scene where the princes demand the elder sister is reminiscent of the scene where the hand of Sita in marriage was sought by Rama and other princes. The love of Daywagonban for the princess is a counterpart to the love of the demon-king for Sita. The stealing of the princess and the god-given bow are direct borrowings from *Rama*. As has been stated, the ogre-princess reminds one of the demon-king's sister, who was changed into a comic villainess in popular adaptations of the court play.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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Mahaw, where the leader of Mahaw's men and a woman attendant on the queen-mother quarrelled and argued and hurled insults at each other. It is likely that that realistic and humorous scene taught U Pon Nya something. As he was very famous as a writer of humorous satires against various types of people, humorous satire naturally comes into some of his plays. In *Waythandaya* the roguish but rather charming hermits who lived on the credulity of simple villagers are well satirized. In *Kawthala* the goatherd is a typical countryman of U Pon Nya's time, good-natured, humorous, indulging in ribald jokes, easygoing, yet at the back of it all, having a shrewd common sense and the utmost loyalty. U Pon Nya has often been criticized for the coarse jokes of his goatherd, but his love of realism and his interest in all types of human character, make him portray the goatherd as he was in real life. It will be out of place to dwell on the humour, satire, and realism of U Pon Nya in his non-dramatic works, but as they are echoed in his plays, perhaps it is essential to give some idea of what he is like in his other works: he is there comparable to Chaucer of the *Canterbury Tales* and the goatherd is but an example of his many creations who are akin to the miller and his quarrelsome companions. The humour of U Pon Nya is said to detract from the artistic unity of his plays. Doubtless, humour is dangerous in Burmese drama, in view of the actor's and the audience's love of laughter, often uncontrolled. U Kyin U did not indulge in humorous scenes or characters, though the interlude had been given to broad humour, perhaps because he thought that the artistry and seriousness of the drama were in danger of being lost in cheap farce. And in the decadent period the uncontrolled use of humour does destroy the artistry of the plays. But U Pon Nya keeps his humour under control, and often through it he increases the artistry of his plays. *Kawthala* has no unity, but the fault is not with the goatherd; in fact, one of the chief reasons why that play is at all interesting, is the existence of that character. In *Waythandaya* the humorous first scene has no direct connexion with the main action, but it stands as a contrast to the second scene, where pathos is the chief note. Again in the third scene U Pon Nya uses humour, but he keeps it under control so as to prevent it from interfering with the events connected with the main action. The failure by the decadent dramatists, who imitate his humorous scenes, encouraged to do so by their great popularity with the audience, to equal or even approach anywhere near U Pon Nya, emphasizes his greatness as a humorist. His humour is

R1: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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536* 522 536* comedy, not farce, and it appeals to the intellect, often helping to portray character, or to satirize the fads and fashions of the time.

With all his romantic tendencies, U Kyin U was a striver after perfection of form in his plays, and U Pon Nya follows him in that respect. U Kyin U aimed at a logical and clear unfolding of the plot. In the section dealing with *The Water-seller* I have shown how U Pon Nya, in striving to conform with this doctrine of U Kyin U was led on to something approximating to the observance of the three 'unities'. Of course, U Kyin U also did not know anything of western drama, but perhaps it will be interesting to consider how far his plays fitted in with the western theory of 'unities'. The unity of action would seem to be the main aim in U Kyin U's plays, for without it the logical unfolding of the plot was not possible. With regard to the unity of place, he did not limit his play to one, but he kept the places of action as few as possible. The forest and the palace were the places of action in *Daywagonban* and *Parpahein*; the action moved from one part of the forest to another, or from one part of the palace to another, but it never left the forest and the palace. In *Mahaw*, the places of action were the two cities. With regard to the unity of time, he did not limit himself to any fixed time, but as the clear unfolding of the plot made it necessary that there should be no gaps of time between the scenes, and very little should happen off-stage, the time of the plays limited itself to a few days. In *Daywagonban*, he had some difficulty as to the time. Sixteen years elapsed between the first scene where the young prince was stolen, and the second scene where he was shown as the adopted son of the ogress. And between that scene and the next, there was an interval of a few months, in which Daywagonban had to be educated by the hermit. After that, the action moved on rapidly and without a gap, except where the princess was put into the dungeon for seven days, but that gap was slightly bridged by the fight between the *naga* and the *galôn*, and the meeting of the hermit and his betrothed, which events happened while the princess was being imprisoned by Daywagonban. In *Parpahein*, the most mature and artistic of his plays, the unity of time was much better achieved. The action lasted from the morning of one day, through the next, until the dawning of the third day, and there were no gaps, most of the time being accounted for before the eyes of the audience. In *Mahaw*, though the actual time was not ascertainable, U Kyin U succeeded in producing the illusion of an action lasting for a few

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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is, forgetting the god's warning, and as a result, she becomes a statue. The god, through his supernatural vision, again sees what is happening, and coming at once, he throws some water on the statue, and Saw-may comes to life again. She is made senior queen. 536*

The last scene is the bedchamber of Saw-phay and Saw-may. They sing to each other and fall asleep. Then the girl wakes up and sings a sorrowful song to herself, bewailing that, although her lover is restored to her, she has to share him with another queen.

This play is undoubtedly the most artistic of all the decadent plays. It tells a coherent story, and there is no glaring attempt at sensationalism, nor are there scenes comparable to the execution scenes of *The History of Thaton* and of the 'Baboon Play'. It is free from blood and horror and too much pathos. And perhaps the story is more logical and more natural because it is the story of lovers and not of brother and sister.

Saw-phay and Saw-may has an effect of artistic completeness which no other play of the period possesses. The action moves logically and smoothly, unhampered by unnecessary scenes or unconnected incidents. The dramatist concentrates on creating an atmosphere of light romance and nothing else, and that atmosphere is sustained throughout the play, unbroken by scenes giving an impression of suspense and horror.

Two scenes need special mention. The scene where Hopeful discourses on the cuckoo is perhaps the best comic scene in Burmese drama. The humour is free from coarseness, a fault of which other dramatists including the great U Pon Nya are guilty. And it is something new in dramatic technique, for although irony has been used before for other purposes, this is the first occasion where it is used purely for comic effect. The audience, knowing that the cuckoo's cry is a signal, laughs with Hopeful, who, in spite of his serious tone and demeanour, is enjoying himself at the expense of the old man. But Hopeful himself is also the victim of the laughter, for he does not realize that the signal is not for the elopement of Saw-may and Hopeful, but of Saw-may and Saw-phay. The last scene of the play is the least artistic, for it savours of sentimentalism and striving after sensational effect. The logical ending of the play, because of its atmosphere of light romance, should be a happy one. When the heroine is brought back to life and made the senior queen, all seems well, for it would not be fair to the State or to the other queen, if the hero were to abdicate or divorce her so that the heroine should be his [522] ●

21: Htin Aung E-5 (cz, 1930) 1337 AP1 Burma
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536* plays, the doctrine of logical and clear unfolding of plot perishes, for there is no plot to unfold.

536* 152 The decadent dramatists try to appeal not to the mind but to the senses, and naturally we find in their plays glaring attempts at sentimentality and sensationalism. Tears occur often and in great abundance on the slightest excuse. Even in the quite artistic 'Baboon Play', sentimentality is the chief fault, and the hero appears weak and unattractive, for he does nothing but cry, trying to protect his sister not by manly action but by tears. One reason why *Saw-phay and Saw-may* appears so far above other plays of the period is in its freedom from sentimental pathos until the last scene. When the heroine and hero are parted, they cry, but they appear sincere in their sorrow, and the play ends quite happily. In most other plays of the period, the hero and heroine are made to undergo misfortune after misfortune, so as to give them ample opportunity to sing pathetic songs. The sentimentality is heightened by sensationalism, for the more unusual and terrible the suffering of hero or heroine the greater is the pathos. When a queen is executed, she has to be slowly beaten. When a hero is put to death, he has to be trodden on by elephants. When a princess is banished, the orders for her exile have to be announced when she is in travail. For, in the decadent drama, swift and sudden death or misfortune seems out of place, and the agony has to be long drawn out and unusual in order to increase the desired effect. Even in the 'Baboon Play', written by the most learned of the decadent dramatists, we find ample use of blood and horror. The First Part of *Saw-phay and Saw-may* is the one play of the period which is free from horror. In *Tin-tin and Khin-khin*, the last scene where the heroine dies dancing, ill and mad, is typically decadent. Madness, leprosy, incest, and a woman in travail are favourite subjects. Dead bodies are popular, and in one play, a scene occurs where the hero is shown roasting and eating his new-born heir.[1]

536* ● 592 Comic scenes occur in the decadent plays, as dramatic relief from scenes of horror and pathos. The humour is good humour, and in many ways it is an advance even on U Pon Nya. Lewd references are very rare. There is some satire, but it is without bitterness. All the comic characters are lovable in their own way. The comedy is one of 'humours', and we have admirably drawn portraits of a nagging wife and a cynical bricklaying philosopher in *The History of*

[1] *When Father Eats His Son*, by an unknown author.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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Thaton, and the bragging hunter in the 'Baboon Play'. Hopeful is an artistically drawn character, and the cuckoo scene is delightful. Other decadent dramatists, though inferior in other respects to the authors of the three plays that I have considered in detail, equal them in comic scenes. The chief fault of the decadent dramatists lies in their inability to portray character, for their 'serious' characters are lifeless; but their comic ones are satisfactory, because although these lack depth, the 'humours' are well shown.

In lyrical beauty the decadent dramatists achieve some distinction. The quality of their verse, especially in songs, is uniformly high. It has a note of tenderness and wistfulness. It will not be out of place perhaps to consider here the verse of Burmese drama. The interlude was mostly in verse, for the actors were primarily singers, and perhaps because of the influence of the *Hawsa* which was a story in verse. The comic characters in the interlude seem to have used prose. The verse was of the variety called the 'four-syllabled line'. Burmese verse depends on rhyme, the number of syllables in each line, and the number of lines. In the 'four-syllabled line' verse, however, the number of lines is not fixed, and therefore a passage can be of any length, provided it has only one rhyme scheme. Each line has four syllables (as Burmese is monosyllabic, each syllable usually means a word). The first line contains a syllable which rhymes with those contained in the second and third lines. But the third, if it is a 'key' line, will contain another syllable which rhymes with the fourth and fifth lines, or fifth and sixth lines. The following diagram will perhaps make it clear:

```
– – – a
– – a –
– a – b   'key' line
– a – –
– – b –
– b – –
– – b –
– b – c   'key' line
– – c –
– c – –
```

The 'key' line with two rhymes need not occur at regular intervals. Although the first 'key' line in a passage usually occurs before the sixth line, it is quite common for the next 'key' line to occur as late as the sixteenth line. It will be seen that the purpose of the

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APPENDIX II

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MAHAW[1]

By U Kyin U

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U Kyin U differs greatly from U Pon Nya in that he does not encourage the comic spirit in the drama. The following scene, the most humorous in his plays, is one of the rare attempts to raise a laugh among the audience.

Enter Mahaw's men and start to pull down the mansion of the queen-mother.

Enter in haste a maid-of-honour.

MAID. Rude rascal, rough rogue, man as stupid as an ox, criminal destined to have his body pierced with repeated punishment! What do you think you are doing? You are trying to imitate the insect who rushed at the candle-flame, bold through blindness. Now, don't be short-sighted, don't be stupid! This is the abode of the queen-mother, do you not know? Can you not see that it is built of glass and inlaid with jewels and gilded with gold? You dirty-looking fellow, you coarsely-clad man, what do you mean by coming here armed with stick and sword, trying to pull our house down? This mansion is not yours, not your business. Now, now, do not stand there jumping with fury, with your dirty and faded-looking body quaking with anger, do not look at me with a bold and angry-looking face. I do not wish to quarrel with you. To tell you the truth, I cannot, for I am a maid-of-honour and therefore miles above you. Go away, man, go away!

MAN. What! Mistress Furious, you do look proud and hurt standing there, looking at me with sorrow and anger! Your tongue is as sharp as a dagger, and your words are as big as mountains. You are as shameless as a prostitute. Now, now, do not come and disturb me at my work. I am preparing the city for the royal visit. I represent the king, I have his authority. Why are you

[1] This play has been considered on pp. 57–61.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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standing there? Do you think you can pierce my body with your look? You do look a sight! Your forehead is too wide, your hair-knot is too small, and your body is too thin. You seem to be a bit disturbed, you are looking anxious. Have you lost your husband and can you not find him?

MAID. Vain man, hard man, fellow whose stupidity is boundless and limitless, uncouth stranger from another city! I do not care whose authority you have, which king you represent. You are a foolish stranger from an uncivilized and backward country. My mistress, the queen-mother, will send you to the king, and then, poor, poor, ignorant countryman, you will be seized, tied with ropes, kicked, beaten, and put into prison. My friend, go away, go away, otherwise your luck will not be so beautiful.

MAN. You talk too much, my ugly, frowning woman. Your words do not fit your action. If you are so powerful, why are you standing there so helplessly? Your words are empty, your pride is great but founded on nothing, your anger can do me no harm. Do not stand there threatening me, glaring at me! Do you not know who I am? I am the leader of wise Mahaw's men, I am the captain of his guard. Minister Mahaw, the great Mahaw, the famous Mahaw. Go back, go away, do not put a lighted match to a mountain of gunpowder. Do you want to suffer grief and pain?

MAID. Fountain-head of rudeness, barbarian, wild man! A ghost is a frightful, evil, ugly being. But you are uglier than a ghost. In fact, you look like a ghost whose face has been made more villainous-looking through being blackened with soot. Hay, Mister Poverty-stricken-ghost! You are what we call a *berla* in Pali. It means a very foolish person. I am a palace-born, a dainty court-maiden. I am not a mad dog, so do not stand there with a stick, attempting to chase me away. You are indeed very insulting. Oh, I shall not argue with you any more, Captain Stupid-as-an-ox. I am going at once to our beloved mistress, the queen-mother. You wait and watch what happens.

MAN. Go on, go and tell, run and report, Mistress Cold-as-diamond-cold, you will soon be shivering with fright, mortification, disappointment, suffering. You are uncouth, uncultured, unlearned. I shall soon pound you into little bits as a cook pounds the paddy. I am the trusted slave of Mahaw, the great Mahaw, the good Mahaw, the renowned Mahaw. I am his faithful captain, gallant leader of his men. And if you want trouble, if you want some painful punishment

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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536* 539* 522 that will make your eyes open wide with suffering, just say some more insulting words. You are rude, country woman.

MAID. You are like the thief who, on entering a house at night and finding the owner sleeping peacefully inside, shouts, 'Help, help, I find a stranger here!' Man, you smell of the wilderness, even your voice is rough and rude. The world is indeed a strange place when there are men like you who can accuse a palace-born of being uncultured. Madman, foolish man, stupid man, your hour has come, your face will soon be distorted with heavy punishment as a wicked criminal. I go to fetch my mistress. [*Exit.*]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

83. DAUTCHA YATHE.

Burma by pilgrims. Dried and gilt leaves are also brought as relics. The seeds of the tropical *ficus* species germinate in the fork of some other tree or in a cranny of masonry and flourish in such mould as they find. The roots develop thick bands which dislodge the masonry, but, interlacing in all directions, hold the loose material together while the tree lives; or else, when the host is another tree, strangle it and take its place (Nos. 77, 245, 321).

The *yahán* are not the only religious celibates of Burma. Several other classes follow this way of life, observing many or few rules, according to their own choice. Nearest to the *yahán* are the *yathé*. They depend chiefly on alms, but cultivate gardens for themselves. Their appeal for alms is mute, they accept them in money as well as in kind, and they lay up a store for actual needs. They take food in the forenoon only. The *yathé*, who are few in number, live in forest caves or in derelict shrines, and shift for themselves, singly or in small colonies. The majority study, though they do not teach; some are illiterate. They receive a certain deference from the laity, and themselves defer to the *yahán*. The *yathé* are the subject of harmless satire and burlesque in the plays; the *yahán* never. The robe is like that of the *yahán*, but dyed tan instead of yellow. *Yathé* mostly shave the head, but there is a class who wear the hair long. Certain of them use a headgear called *dautcha*, which forms a receptacle for an image of the Buddha. Some are addicted to mild forms of occultism such as alchemy (p. 111) and devising cabalistic diagrams for charms and tattoo-marks. These practices are under the ban of Buddhism. Pretensions to occult powers, such as have

84. CAVE-SHRINE NEAR MAULMAIN.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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350. THE BURMAN BALLET (HAN-PWE).

date in the most fantastic way. The course of love is interrupted by all manner of vicissitudes — some grotesque, others of genuine pathos, to which the sentiment of the music is exquisitely adapted. The modulation of the vocal expression is much more subtle and intense than the expression of the features. Gesture is restricted to the conventional postures of the dance. The street or other open space is swept clear for the performance and laid with mats in the centre. A pavilion roof of bamboo is erected and covered with mats or thatch to keep off the sun by day and the dew by night; it is open at the sides. A space, twenty to thirty feet wide, is kept for the actors and musicians. The masks which will be worn in certain parts are hung out. Actors and actresses make up in public. There is a water-jar for the common use of actors and audience; both light their cheroots at the same lamps or torches. The spectators squat round the actors' circle, women and children in front, men standing behind. For the marionettes or *yotthé* a stage is erected. The entertainment goes on all night, frequently several nights in succession. The action of the play is slow, the dialogue is sung and spun out, with interludes of dancing and posturing, to the accompaniment of the music. There are breaks of spoken dialogue when the music stops, and the clowns indulge in banter, and set conundrums. The topical allusions are of a pungent description; the spice of coarseness is on a par with the taste of our Elizabethan public. The slightness of the distinctions of words makes the resources of *double entendre* especially rich, most of all when a foreigner, preferably from Europe, is brought on the scene. Peals of laughter proclaim these interludes from afar.

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351. THE BURMAN BALLET (HAN-PWE).